



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

Last year, the Arizona Office of Tourism, in cooperation with the Cactus League Baseball Association, commissioned a survey to track and profile attendees of the Cactus League Spring Training baseball games. This was done to help us better understand the type of visitor that comes to see these games and the economic impact they have on the state. The survey was conducted in March of 2007. The results are in and have revealed some great news for Arizona's economy. According to the Cactus League Attendee Tacking and Expenditure Impact survey, more than one million Spring Training fans spent a total of \$310,775,015 within the Grand Canyon State in 2007. This is a 54 percent increase from 2003 when fans spent a total of \$201,608,787. This is exceptional news for Arizona's economy and shows us how these events have such a tremendous economic benefit that resonates throughout Arizona.

The survey also revealed that 57 percent of Spring Training attendees came to Arizona from another state or country, which is an increase from 48 percent in 2003. Overall, out-of-state Spring Training visitors represented 44 states, as well as the District of Columbia, Canada, Germany and Mexico. And more than 68 percent of out-of-state visitors indicated that coming to a Spring Training game was their "primary" reason for visiting Arizona. This is also great news as our international market is crucial to the state's economy and one that we continue to work on to increase.

For more details about the survey, visit www.cactusleague.com.

Have a great week.

Margie R. Emmert

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Be a Part of the Fiesta Bowl Parade

As part of AOT's partnership with the Fiesta Bowl, we have been approached by the Fiesta Bowl Parade committee to lend our support to this year's parade. AOT has a long history of supporting not only the game, but all of the festivities surrounding the Fiesta Bowl. With this year's parade theme, "A Celebration of Arizona," the Fiesta Bowl Parade committee has asked AOT to reach out to communities and CVBs throughout the state and inform them of this opportunity. With so many visitors in town for the game(s), being a part of this New Year's tradition could be a perfect way to show off your piece of the Grand Canyon State. If you are interested in learning more about participating in the Fiesta Bowl Parade, please contact Sherry Henry with the Fiesta Bowl at 480-517-6284 or via e-mail at shenry@fiestabowl.org.

AOT Debuts Page-Turning Technology on ArizonaGuide.com

AOT has recently added a new feature to the consumer Web site, www.arizonaguide.com. Visitors to the site can now order a digital version of the 2007 Official State Visitor's Guide (OSVG), in addition to – or instead of, the printed guide. The digital version offers a page-turning technology allowing consumers to view the content of the guide as if it were an online magazine. Readers of the digital guide can bookmark pages, make notes, print pages, search by word, navigate directly to sections from the table of contents, use a one-click feature to add content from the guide to other sites, link to advertisers and constituents and much more. To order the digital version of the OSVG, please visit www.arizonaguide.com. For additional information, contact Troy Thompson at 602-364-3699 or via e-mail at tthompson@azot.gov.

AOT Welcomes New Staff Member

The Arizona Office of Tourism welcomes Elysia Labita as AOT's new Advertising Coordinator. Her responsibilities will include assisting the Director of Advertising and Fulfillment with all division activities. She'll manage the trafficking process between AOT and the contracted advertising agencies with creative, insertion orders, estimates, invoices, etc., and will serve as the main point of contact for general advertising inquiries. Before joining AOT, Elysia was a media coordinator with AIR Marketing, a full-service advertising agency in Phoenix. She can be contacted at 602-364-3705 or via e-mail at elabita@azot.gov.

Save the Date: Grand Impressions Workshops 2007

Grand Impressions workshops reach out to front-line tourism industry employees, conveying the importance of customer service in the travel industry and offering general information about Arizona attractions, enabling these employees to become ambassadors for the state. The 2007 workshops will feature the latest trends, research and information in customer service when working for and/or with older adults and Americans with disabilities. There will be a presentation by the Arizona Game and Fish Department on our state's Watchable Wildlife and an in-depth presentation on Arizona tourism attractions. There will also be an opportunity to tour the meeting

locations. Workshop participants will receive a certificate of completion and a complimentary lunch, along with free resource materials from presenters. The Grand Impression workshops are free of charge to those who wish to participate. Reservations are required and will be accepted on first come, first service basis, as seating is limited. Please register soon. For more information, or to make a reservation, please contact Sarah Martins at 602-364-3687 or via e-mail at smartins@azot.gov.

May 9, 2007

8:15 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Pueblo Grande Museum and Archaeological Park
4619 E. Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85034

May 11, 2007

8:15 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Arizona Sonora Desert Museum-Ocotillo Café
2021 N. Kinney Road
Tucson, AZ 85743

May 30, 2007

8:15 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Tim's Toyota Center (Formerly Prescott Valley Convention & Events Center)
3201 North Main Street
Prescott Valley, AZ 86314

Industry News

At Pow Wow: Top 10 International Markets

Canada and Mexico continue to be the driving force in international tourism to the U.S., according to figures released this week at the TIA International Pow Wow in Anaheim, Calif. Canadians solidified their top market status in 2006 for the third consecutive year of at least 7 percent annual growth. However, the 16 million visitors remained well below the 1991 record level of 19.1 million, according to the Office of Travel and Tourism Industries. Mexico had a 6 percent growth in visitors to the U.S., with 13.4 million arrivals. The bad news was that the next four international markets-the U.K., Japan, Germany and France-all showed declines in visitors to the U.S. in 2006. The U.K., still the top overseas market at 4.2 million arrivals, was down 4 percent, while Japan, at 3.7 million arrivals, was off 5 percent. Germany, with 1.4 million, was down 2 percent, and France, at 790,000 visitors, was down 10 percent. For 2007, the OTTI is projecting 52,799,000 international travelers to the U.S., an increase of 3 percent over 2006, according to Director Helen Marano. (*A TA Special Report*)

Gasoline at \$4 a Gallon?

Gasoline prices are approaching the scary \$3-a-gallon mark they passed last summer and in 2005 when hurricanes ripped apart the Gulf Coast oil infrastructure and world oil supplies were stressed. Today, oil supplies aren't pinched, but rusty U.S. refineries aren't producing enough gasoline to meet demand, which is driving up pump prices ahead of summer's peak driving season, and some fear \$4-a-gallon gas looms. The average price of regular gasoline was \$2.95 a gallon in Miami on Thursday, according to AAA. That's up 31 cents a gallon from a month ago. Experts disagree on what lies ahead. Some think today's high gasoline prices--a nationwide

average of about \$2.85 a gallon--are near their peak. Others warn that we haven't seen anything yet. *(Page 1C, Miami Herald)*

Targeting in Travel is More Important Than Ever

About 124 million Americans took a vacation in the past year, amounting to 55 percent of the adult population. They typically took three trips per year, spending \$1,500 and traveling 1,200 miles from home, says a new survey. Traveling by car continues to be the top form of transportation for a vacation trip; however, at least one trip per year is by plane, said the study from American Express and Travel Industry Association (TIA). Generally, vacation travelers take at least two vacation trips that include hotel stays, but the most common accommodations are friends' or relatives' homes (24 percent) and moderately priced hotels or motels (19 percent). Americans most often take a vacation trip with their spouse or significant other (62 percent). The most popular trip destinations are cities and urban areas (39 percent), followed by small towns and rural areas (26 percent), and ocean beaches (23 percent). The most popular activities are sightseeing (51 percent) and shopping (51 percent). What is the ideal vacation trip? The report found that overall, rest and relaxation and spending time with significant others are the most important attributes of an ideal vacation. Vacation travelers would like to travel more by plane and by ship and, not surprisingly, would like to double the length of their average trip. While spending time with family is an important aspect of leisure travel, it's currently the most fulfilled need of the vacation traveler. Freedom, escape, and spending time with one's significant other are less fulfilled. "While the American love affair with the vacation trip is still strong, this research reveals that the travel industry has the opportunity to do much more to enhance the vacation experience for travelers of all ages, family types, and motivations," said Lisa Gregg, Vice President of Marketplace Development/North America for American Express. Dr. Suzanne Cook, Senior Vice President of Research for the Travel Industry Association, agreed: In a day and age of relatively modest growth in travel, targeting specific groups of vacation travelers is more important than ever." The study also found that ideal vacation destinations for American vacation travelers are those that offer an easy travel experience, a sense of fun and adventure, and local flavor. *(Report by David Wilkening for TravelMole Online Newsletter)*